WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 MAY 1982

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

EXPERTS WILL APPRAISE ANTIQUES FREE MAY 27

Pick out some of your favorite heirlooms and bring them to the Salvation Army Citadel at 8 p.m. Thursday, May 27, for a free exper appraisal of their value and scarcity by volunteer professional appraisers.

Iver Schmidt of Schmidt's Antiques in Ypsilanti and others will be on hand to help evaluate them. Schmidt, a WCHS board member, is familiar with many types of antiques and specializes in porcelains, pottery, glassware and old silver.

Those attending are welcome to bring any items they can carry through the door. A short annual meeting is also planned that evening.

WCHS TABLES FURTHER POWERHOUSE PLANNING

The Board of Directors of the Washtenaw County Historical Society has voted to table further discussion about the Barton Pond Powerhouse museum site until questions dealing with the site are resolved. These questions include the city of Ann Arbor's commitment and involvement in generating power at the site and developing access.

The board decided to investigate its own goals and objectives in developing the Barton site as well as other society-sponsored projects including other museum sites, joint activities with other Washtenaw County societies and community-wide fund raisers.

Your opinions as members of the WCHS are solicited and we hope that you contact your board members at the membership meetings to share your thoughts.

SEA CAPTAIN JOHN DIX DROPPED ANCHOR AT DIXBORO IN 1824, WCHS TO TOUR HOMES THERE SATURDAY, JUNE 26

A quiet inland village founded by a haughty sea captain in the 1820's and haunted long ago by a feminine ghost will be the destination of the WCHS tour Saturday, June 26, to "Historic Dixboro and Beyond."

Besides visits to the antique shops in the Dixboro store and garage and luncheon at the white colonial Dixboro Methodist Church the tour will visit several of the oldest homes in the area.

Carol Willits Freeman, life-long resident and author of *Of Dixboro: Lest We Forget,* a detailed and nostalgic 153-page history, will be the guide.

Homes in Dixboro to be opened include the Greek Revival Clements-Shrope-Barnes house, the Campbell-Schmid-Trotter house, the Young-Quackenbush-Gibb-Ahearn and the Mulholland-Shuart-Pierce homes.

Beyond Dixboro, houses to be opened will be the McCormick-Covert-Hibbard house (Skypoint), the Galpin-Smith Centennial Farm house, the Pray-Geer-Burmeister and the Lay-Hagler homes.

The 1836 Pray and 1837 Galpin homes were built of home-made local bricks. The Pray home was a pioneer tavern. The first meeting of the township of Panama (Salem and Superior) was held in John McCormick's log cabin on the Skypoint site in 1828.

The Haglers told how they saved the 1833 Lay house from demolition, moved and restored it at the November WCHS meeting (December 1981 *Impressions).*

Ezra D. Lay was president of the Washtenaw County Pioneer Society in 1880-81 when the *Washtenaw County History* was published under Society auspices. WCHS is the legal successor of the Pioneer Society.

The tour will be $16 per person Prepaid reservations due Friday, June 18 to Chairman Frances Couch. (See reservation card enclosed.)

The tour bus will board at 9 a.m. at Arborland Shopping Center near the automatic post office and is scheduled to return there by 5 p.m. Only registered tourgoers admitted to homes. Shoes must be removed in the houses. For more information call 761-5537.

WCHS ELECTION, ANNUAL MEETING PLANNED MAY 27

The WCHS annual meeting with election of officers will be held in conjunction with the antique appraisal night at 8 p.m. Thursday, May 27, at the Salvation Army Citadel, West Huron at Arbana, Ann Arbor.

Nominees to the board include Patricia Dufek, Carol Freeman, Arthur French and Esther Warzynski for terms expiring in June 1985; Frances Couch and Bradley Taylor, to fill terms expiring in 1984; and Mary Blaske and Kathleen Sherzer, to fill terms expiring in 1983.

Officer nominees are Patricia Austin, president; Johanna Wiese, vice-president; Alice Ziegler, recording secretary; Ethelyn Morton, corresponding secretary; and Elizabeth Dusseau, treasurer.

ANTIQUE WICKER BABY CARRIAGE GIVEN WCHS

An antique wicker baby carriage was given to WCHS by Nellie Mae Helber of 413 East Liberty Street, next to Great Lakes Federal Savings, who died recently.

Wystan Stevens brought it to Kempf House where Patricia Austin picked it up for temporary storage. It made quite a sensation as she wheeled it through the library parking lot, even without a baby and a parasol in and on it.

THEY CALL IT 'ICONOGRAPHY'*

TECHNIQUE MAKES OLD DETROIT PICTURES 'MOVE'

WCHS saw old Detroit at its March meeting via a rare film, "A Guest in Old Detroit," composed of still pictures, even tintypes, which seemed to move.

It was made from photographs in the Clarence M. Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library and narrated by Bud Guest, retired Detroit radio personality and son of Edgar A. Guest, late Detroit newspaperman and poet.

The film, commissioned by the Burton Abstract Company shortly before it merged with a larger company, shows downtown Detroit from just after the Civil War up to the auto era.

Ray Spokes, son-in-law of Clarence Burton and a director on the abstract company board when the film was made about 1966 thinks he has the only copy. It cost about $75,000 to make. He has donated it to WCHS.

Ironically, he voted against making it because he didn't think anything like this film could be done. But with techniques of "panning" or moving the movie camera across the pictures and using "zoom" or close-up lens to move into and away from the pictures, the makers achieved the effect of movement, more entertaining than a mere succession of stills.

"Detroit is a very old city as American cities go. It was founded in 1701 by a few Frenchmen who paddled past it in canoes, liked what they saw and came back to build a wooden fort," Bud Guest began.

"My own memories don't go back that far but they do span about half a century. I remember my dad and his pride in his brand new car, and happy days with the kids in my neighborhood on Atkinson Avenue.

"A generation before my time, Detroit was full of kids who rode their bikes, drove their wagons, sailed their boats and dreamed great dreams. If you were a member of that generation what you would remember most probably would be Belle Isle. You went by steamer on a balmy Sunday afternoon. You sat on the banks of the stream and watched the boats, you got together with friends on a picnic, you made yourself comfortable in a canoe, shaded yourself with a parasol or enjoyed a fine concert by a band on the bridge.

"Let's take a walk up Woodward Avenue back to yesterday when Detroit was known as the most beautiful city in America, when Grand Circus Park seemed pretty far uptown, when Cadillac Square was a market place and exciting news events brought people out in great crowds to Campus Martius.

"Even then the streets throbbed with busy people, there were fires, football games, traffic problems.

"The Burton collection has rounded up enough old pictures to give a vivid impression of what Detroit was like in those days when the streets were paved with mud and the sidewalks often made of boards.

"The years of 1866—1900 were exciting, fast-moving years. The population of Detroit doubled, then redoubled in a pattern that would carry over into the 20th century.

"Now we're looking up Woodward Avenue in the 1890's and up Monroe where until quite recently the old opera house, which became a store in its later years, was a prominent feature of Campus Martius.

"In the summer of 1966 the historic old opera house is being destroyed. Nearly 70 years earlier in the same place the first Detroit opera house was destroyed by fire in 1897. In its heyday it had been a truly glamorous place, its roof topped with gleaming golden eagles.

"The 1890's were stirring times in Detroit. We had come a long way from our backwoods beginnings. We were proud of our elegant carriages fine horses, fashionable ladies and busy, enterprising men. The open air street cars were a far cry from the little horse cart of a few years earlier. Progress was in the air.

"Some scenes of those days are still recognizable today. For instance this balcony on East Jefferson. A century or so ago men in top hats stood on this balcony and made speeches to crowds in the streets. It looked down upon a host of big events including some of the early auto races. A few doors away were shops of some of the leading merchants— O. Hesselbacher, M. C. Fecheimer, and Fireman's Hall which was the scene of major political and social events, and the Biddle House, one of the major hotels.

"On Woodward there still re-

Photos courtesy of Historical Society of Michigan

TRANQUIL WOODWARD AVENUE, DETROIT, CIRCA 1870
The group of trees is Grand Circus Park.

*Ford L. Lemler, retired director of the U-M Audio-Visual Center, who typesets this newsletter, identified the technique of camera movement in "A Guest in Old Detroit" for us.

main a few buildings that have lasted a century or so. At the corner now occupied by the city-county building was the site of the Scotch Store.

"Then, practically everybody rode bicycles — even the Detroit police used them. A few of the wilder riders were toying with putting motors on them.

"In ships, sail was rapidly giving way to steam but long after the engines came, the ships were still equipped with masts. We knew that the age of power was here, but was it here to stay?

"Traffic grew. Ships got bigger. Commerce and passenger travel between Detroit and other Great Lakes ports increased at a rapid rate. Even if you weren't going anywhere it was exciting to come down to the docks and see the ships come in.

"There was no bridge, no tunnel. If you were going to or from Windsor you took a ferry boat.

"Some years earlier a Detroiter had written, 'Windsor is a small village across the river from Detroit, chiefly deriving its importance from the facility with which the revenue laws of the U. S. may be violated.'

"The railroads also provided excitement," he said. "There was always something doing at the stations of the Grand Trunk and Michigan Central.

"You could catch the late news on the wall of the newspaper offices — my father's first job at age 14 was posting these bulletins.

"Our greatest citizen up to a century ago was Lewis Cass. He had been governor of the territory of Michigan when the entire area contained only 6,000 settlers. He was minister to France, U.S. senator, Democratic nominee for president. When he died, his fellow Detroiters gathered in Campus Martius to pay him honor as they had done a year earlier on the death of President Lincoln.

"A few years earlier we had sent many of our young men off to the Civil War. They trained at Detroit's Fort Wayne. Years later in 1891 they returned when the GAR held a great meeting in Detroit. They

EARLY OLDS, $650

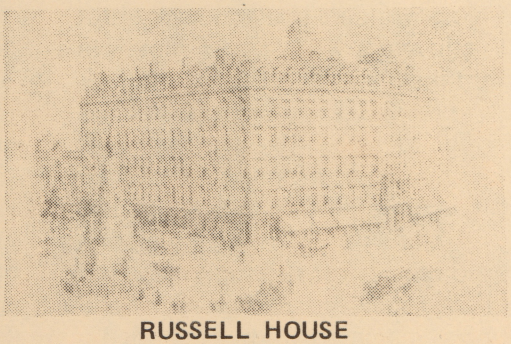
Before seatbelts and superhighways, they promised no accidents but they were thinking of runaway horses. Present day stickers are at least ten times more shocking. From *Harper's Weekly,* March 14, 1903.

paraded for hours with children running alongside.

"Another thing those children—who would now be in their eighties—would remember would be the state fair when it used to be held out near Fort Wayne.

"What marvels it brought to our city — the original one man band, adventurous travelers, Madame Cathrita who could read the future. There were displays of proud new products—woven wire fence, stoves. Detroit was very big on stoves in those days. We even had a Ferris wheel.

"Downtown, a block or so from city hall, you could find quiet tree-lined streets where people had their homes, and over in Capitol Square, away from the hustle and bustle of the business district was *the* high school— there was only one until



RUSSELL HOUSE
Detroit's finest 19th century hotel.

the 20th century.

"We had our football heroes in those days too but baseball was the most popular sport. Detroit won the world professional championship in 1887.

"Our amateurs also distinguished themselves. Here is the Detroit Athletic Club team. The young first baseman went on to distinguish himself off the field as mayor of Detroit and namesake of an expressway — John C. Lodge.

"There wasn't much to worry about in those golden days, but there were fires— boilers blew up in the new factories and wooden houses burned down if given half a chance. At the corner of Larned and Washington there was a watchtower. If the watcher saw smoke, away went the firemen. It was a great day in 1860 when Detroit got its first steam fire engine."

In January 1893 came one of the City's worst fires — the high school which was on the site of the first state capitol — hence the name, Capitol Square. The new high school was built "way out north" — we know it now as 'Old Main' at Wayne State University.

"In the olden days the center of the town's activity was Campus Martius. After the Civil War we decided to build a fine monument there. It was a big moment when on April 9, 1872, it was unveiled."

The former open market at Cadillac Square was replaced by a new market building right next to Detroit's finest hotel, the Russell House. The market building was on the site of the 1835 city hall, called scornfully "cobweb hall" before it was replaced in 1871 by the then new city hall on the former site of Cheap John's Auction Rooms. The site of the 1871 city hall is now known as Kennedy Square.

"We had no movies, no TV, no radio, but we did have circuses. Boy, did we have circuses. All summer long there was hardly a week when one of the big shows wasn't playing in Detroit and they all had parades. Barefoot boys and girls in braids and long starchy dresses lined the curbs faithfully to look over the attractions of each new show. Cir-

cuses had been coming here since 1821."

Many Detroiters saw their first electric light at a circus, as well as their first two-headed boy. It was in a circus advertisement that Detroiters got their first inkling of their city's destiny — a horseless carriage. The ads called it a marvel of the age but it was at first considered a circus freak.

(Mrs. Clarence Burton was the first person who drove an auto down Woodward when it was mud from Brainard Street to the river, Spokes said. His father-in-law commented that she was heavily dressed so she wouldn't catch cold.)

"When the auto did arrive on the scene at the turn of the century the changes were rapid. Haywagons disappeared from Campus Martius, concrete replaced mud on Woodward, farms gave way to factories.

"Automobiles very soon were being driven by practically everybody and suddenly it seemed that nearly everybody in town was making them. Here is a man named Chapin who built the Hudson, a man named Crittenden who built the Crit.

"Since those days the factories have changed as much as the cars." Older factories had belt-drive machinery. Skilled craftsmen and men headed for Detroit from everywhere on the globe. There were the Chalmers plant, the Sibley plant, the Wilson body company.

"We not only made them, we sold them. Cars like the Welch were ingeniously publicized by dashing young public relations men and glamour girls. One year we had a huge nationwide sales conference. Among those in attendance — President Woodrow Wilson and Henry Ford.

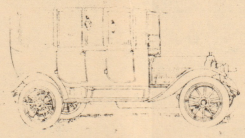
"The auto was also a marvelous inspiration for songwriters. We had tender ballads like "In An Automobile Built for Two" (Her soul is enraptured, her soul you have captured in an automobile built for two.)

"You are with me heart and soul, if you buy a Cole." Singing commercials aren't new. The Studebaker brothers also used them to build their family wagon business long before they began building automobiles.

"One song went 'I'd rather go walking with the man I love than ride in your automobile' but most girls just couldn't get enough of automobiling.

"The biggest event of those days was the annual Glidden Tour — a cross country endurance run that attracted nationwide attention. In 1908 the starting place was the old Pontchartrain Hotel. Downtown Detroit was jammed with spectators. Charles Jasper Glidden, wealthy paint manufacturer, put up the trophy.

"There were Masons, Chalmers, Hupmobiles, Molines and Sewells. Oh we were on our way, but we still had a long way to go. The old crank was such a nuisance that we racked our brains to invent a self starter and some genius came up with what many people thought was the greatest invention of all — the windshield. It all happened so fast that nobody noticed when the horses disappeared."



MILAN SOCIETY UNCOVERS MURAL IN HACK HOUSE

A hand-painted ceiling mural has been uncovered during restoration of the Hack House at Milan. The Hack House is being restored as a museum by the society.

The mural which extends 12-14 inches down the side walls and over the ceiling of the dining room includes a border, trees, birds, and flowers. It was found under four layers of wallpaper and appears to be green, although President Tom King wonders if it was really blue, yellowed by wallpaper glue. He thinks it was done about 1875-80.

King asks if anyone knows how to safely remove the glue without removing the mural paint. If so, please call him at 439-3100.

His wife, Terri, also welcomes old recipes for the soon-to-be published society cookbook. Contributors' names will be included.

STEP INTO PAST MAY 23 AT COBBLESTONE FESTIVAL

Blacksmithing, maple sugaring and lace making will be among a variety of 19th century handicrafts to be demonstrated at the ninth annual Cobblestone Farm spring festival noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 23, at the farm, 2781 Packard Road at Buhr Park.

Also planned— chimney sweep at work, horsedrawn wagon rides, authentic 19th century country dances by the Cobblestone Country Dancers, tours of the 1844 house (donation requested) and 1837 log cabin, sale of refreshments and bedding plants to benefit the restoration.

IRISH ROOTS TALK, PICNIC ELECTION SET BY GSWC

Officers will be elected for 1982-83 at the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County meeting at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, May 23, at Washtenaw Community College.

Glen Ruggles of Union Lake will talk about Irish genealogical research. A 1 p.m. class is planned.

The annual picnic will be at 1 p.m. Sunday, June 27, at White Lodge Country Club, 4180 Colonial Drive, Pinckney, with Vice-president Bob and Luella Lutz as hosts.

The society plans to read Benton and St. James Cemeteries west of Saline on Sunday afternoon July 25. For more information call 483-3779.

SALEM OFFICERS ELECTED

Irene Lyke (Mrs. Ronald) was re-elected president of the Salem Historical Society; Gert Murray, vice-president; Adeline Dunn, secretary; and Helen Wheeler, treasurer.

PLANNING TO RESTORE OLD SUPERIOR TOWN HALL

Peggy Haines is chairman of a 12-member committee in Superior township to find a permanent site to which to move the old town hall and restore it.

The old hall, now at the Whitaker-Gooding Gravel pit on Cherry Hill Road, originally stood on the southwest corner of Prospect and Cherry Hill, now a small county park.

NEW LOCAL CHAPTER OF MILITARY ORDER OF PURPLE HEART NAMED FOR REVOLUTIONARY VET JOHN TERHUNE

A local chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, named for John Terhune, a Revolutionary soldier buried in Ann Arbor, has been organized during this, the 200th anniversary of establishment of the award by General George Washington.

"Washington personally designed the medal as 'the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding' to be worn on the left breast," according to *American Heritage* magazine (April–May 1981).

Only three of them were known to have been awarded in 1783 to three sergeants at Newburgh, New York, encampment before the award fell into disuse. They were the nation's first military decoration and first in the world awarded to enlisted men.

The award was revived on the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth, February 22, 1933, and the first of the redesigned medals awarded to a young officer showing great promise, Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur. Since then they have been awarded to soldiers wounded in combat.

Hugh Gaston has been elected commander of John Terhune Chapter 459 which has 21 charter members. The group's next meeting will be Tuesday, May 25, at the Ann Arbor American Legion. A state meeting is planned in June and a national meeting in August with ceremonies on the last day in Newburgh, New York.

While there is no record Ensign John Terhune ever received the award, he was wounded. A bayonet scar was still visible on his chest when he died according to the *Michigan Argus* of January 17, 1839. One report says he suffered nine bayonet wounds in combat, making him an appropriate namesake for an order of combat wounded.

Terhune is buried off Packard near US-23 above Terhune Street in Forestbrooke Subdivision beside his wife, Sarah, also a Revolutionary heroine. Reportedly she, 17, ran several miles at dawn through brush and woods to warn American forces bivouacked on the Hackensack (New Jersey) River that Hessian troops were camped on a corner of her father's farm.

One version has it that this was after she saw her aged and bedridden grandfather shot before her eyes by a British officer. Ensign Terhune whom she later married was among the soldiers she warned.

Terhune was one of several Revolutionary soldiers buried in the county and the only one to the editor's knowledge that was given public recognition through a street name. Ironically, Terhune street runs off Brandywine, a fine sounding name but one that commemorates an American defeat in the Revolution.

Incidentally, Hugh Gaston, tells us that when he was a University of Michigan student, he lived in a third floor room in Lucy Chapin's house in 1929-31 and helped her with clearing walks and such.

One of his duties was to dust weekly the Chapin piano, Ann Arbor's first, brought here in 1827 by oxcart which the late Miss Chapin gave to WCHS. WCHS restored it in 1974 and it is now housed with the U-M's Stearns Collection of musical instruments.

WCHS WELCOMES 63 SHARP NEW MEMBERS FROM SHOW

WCHS welcomes 63 new members who won a year's membership by correctly identifying at least 18 of 20 items in the antique "What Is It?" contest at the Ann Arbor Home Show April 2–4. At least 120 persons played.

Eleven with perfect scores were R. Park Carmon, T. Fuleky, Ann Hofmann, James Morse, Robert Ongan, Susan Sobota, all of Ann Arbor; Andrew Fath of Midland; Charles Louch, Saline; Larry Cossey, Whitmore Lake; Jan Faul, Ypsilanti; and Richard Carter (no address given).

WCHS THANKS APRIL HOME SHOW HELPERS

WCHS thanks Brad Taylor for setting up the Home Show booth with the "What Is It?" game and the following people who staffed the booth during the show:

Pat Austin, Trudi and Shelley Barnett, Paul Boyer, Fran Couch, Reeva Cranor, Lois Foyle, Carol Freeman, Virginia Gutknecht, Mary Heald, Harold Jones, Harriet and Tom Lacy, Rosalie Moore, Ethelyn Morton, Dave Pollock, Pete Rocco, Iver Schmidt, Helen Schmutz, Esther Warzynski, Millicent Willits, Maxine Witting, and Alice Ziegler.

NORTHWEST CORNER OF MAIN AND LIBERTY STREETS CIRCA 1940-42

Ralph Muncy snapped this picture of Mack's Department Store just before the upper stories were torn down and Cunningham's Drug Store built on the corner, now the Parthenon Gyros Restaurant. Mack's closed in 1940. Cunningham's opened at 226 on July 22, 1942, according to the *Ann Arbor News*. Muncy donated the picture to WCHS. Can anyone date it any closer?

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS: OF SUMMER PLANS, ARROWHEADS, GERMAN, IRISH HERITAGE

Dexter Historical Society — Redecoration of the museum at 3443 Inverness will delay its opening to Tuesday, June 15. Then it will be open each Tuesday and the second and fourth Saturdays from 1 — 3 p.m. A special open house is planned 1 — 4 p.m. Sunday, June 20. Some local private collections will be on display that day only.

June meeting 8 p.m., June 10, at the museum instead of on the first Thursday. The annual meeting will be 1 p.m. Sunday, July 25, at the museum, beginning with a family potluck dinner.

Manchester Historical Society — A work meeting at the blacksmith shop, 324 East Main Street, was held May 17 to mow and clean-up. The Society will meet there through July on its regular 8 p.m. third Monday schedule and may assist with an historical exhibit at the Manchester fair during the third week of August.

Their main activity, however, is the fund drive to pay for the blacksmith shop, a future museum. A flyer was to go to area residents about the drive and tickets are being sold for a lottery drawing July 4 at the Manchester Men's Club outing at Carr Park with several money prizes of $100, $50 and $25.

Milan Historical Society — Meets through summer, 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday at Hack House, 775 County Street. Harry Dicken of Milan was to talk about his 50-year collection of arrowheads at the May meeting.

Dates are not firm but the society may have an ice cream social, a yard sale and a tour or two this summer. Call 439-8319 for dates.

Northfield Historical Society — 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 25, at St. John's Lutheran Church for tour of church and cemetery. Pastor Mattek will talk about the history of the church.

Salem Historical Society — The society held an all-day clean-up session at South Salem Stone School, North Territorial at Curtis Road, May 12 and plans monthly meetings there this summer at 7 p.m. the second Thursday. A yard sale is planned later.

Saline Historical Society — 3 p.m. Sunday, May 23. Meet at 6666 Saline-Ann Arbor Road for hike through former Guenther Gardens across road. Botanist will lead hike, identify plants.

Annual election and picnic, 5 p.m. Sunday, June 27, at home of President Wendy and Norman Blackie, 6039 Saline-Ann Arbor Road. No more meetings until fall.

WCHS PICNIC ANYONE?

Anyone out there interested in a WCHS picnic, possibly Sunday, August 8? Anyone interested enough to help plan it? If so, call Ethelyn Morton, 662-2634.

Webster Historical Society — 7:30 p.m. Monday, June 7, at Webster Community House. Irish Heritage Night to honor Webster and Northfield Irish families, sing some Irish songs, see travel pictures of the "ould sod". Norma McAllister, past president of the Dexter Historical Society, who has done research on local Irish families, will talk about their history. President Jim Parker says public welcome, you don't have to be Irish.

Otherwise the society is bending all efforts toward a bigger and better Fall Festival September 18 — 19. New this year will be a parade on Saturday, a house tour on Sunday.

Ypsilanti Historical Society — Foster Lambie Fletcher, Ypsilanti city historian, was honored Sunday, May 16, on his 85th birthday with an open house at the Ypsilanti Museum.

The museum at 220 North Huron Street is open 2 — 4 p.m. each Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. During the Ypsilanti Yesteryear Festival weekend August 27 — 29 it will be open at 10 a.m. each day and close at 5:30 p.m. on Friday and Sunday and 8 p.m. Saturday.

Next issue in September.

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

8:00 p.m. THURSDAY May 27, 1982

SALVATION ARMY

West Huron at Arbana Ann Arbor, Michigan

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 96
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Mr. Foster Fletcher
4980 W. Michigan Ave.
Ypsilanti, Mich.
48197